

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 – Mon, Jan 23

Please plan to arrive in the afternoon/evening and transfer to our hotel. The hotel has a shuttle which you can call for a pick-up to get you to the hotel. Your guide will meet you in the lobby for dinner and a quick orientation at 6 PM. ***Night in Minneapolis***

Day 2 – Tues, Jan 24

After breakfast, before we begin our drive north towards Duluth, we will take time exploring some of the good birding spots around the Twin Cities. We will probably head down to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge to look for Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, and American Tree Sparrow. There is always a chance of a vagrant Gyrfalcon preying on the regular wintering flock of Mallard. ***Night in Duluth***

Days 3-5 – Wed, Jan 25 – Fri, Jan 27

Our itinerary over the next few days will depend on where the birds are and, of course, the weather. Places we plan to visit include Two Harbors on Lake Superior, Sax-Zim Bog, the Duluth waterfront, and Superior National Forest, among others. Due to the harsh wintry conditions and low temps, birding in Minnesota this time of year can be very sparse, but our local contacts will clue us in to where everything is being seen. We will drive from spot to spot, searching for all the northern and boreal winter specialties: Black-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers, Northern Shrike, Bohemian Waxwing, Rough-legged Hawk, Sharp-tailed and Spruce Grouse, Hoary and Common Redpolls, Pine Siskin, Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, Common Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, and Gray Jay. Depending on this year's food supply and severity of weather, owls may include Great Gray, Snowy, Boreal, Northern Hawk and Northern Saw-whet.

Our Duluth hotel is located just above Lake Superior, and should any gull be present we will do daily checks for interesting species. Any open patch of water on the lake can attract any number of gull species, and we will be on the lookout for Herring, Iceland, and Glaucous Gulls. Even Ivory Gull has been present in past winters! ***Nights in Duluth***

Day 6 – Sat, Jan 28

After breakfast we will start our drive back towards the Minneapolis-St Paul Airport, checking for any species that we may have missed on the way north. We will also keep an eye on the rare bird alerts for any goodies that have shown up – Golden-crowned Sparrows, for example, have visited feeders in Duluth the last few winters. Please plan your departure flights from Minneapolis-St Paul after 3 PM to give us plenty of time to drive south from Duluth.

This itinerary may change depending on the birds, the weather and the whims of the leader!